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MORAL AND POLITICAL
MODERATION
RECOMMENDED:

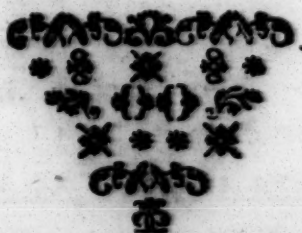
IN A
FAST-SERMON,

DELIVERED,

At St. MILDRED's, in the Poultry,
LONDON,

FRIDAY, December 13, 1776:

By AUGUSTUS TOPLADY, A. B.
Vicar of BROAD HEMBURY.



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FAST-SERMON

2119:05



PHILIPPIANS IV. 5.

Let your Moderation be known unto all Men.

IT was a favorite and frequent remark of King Henry VII. that, *When Christ came into the World, PEACE was sung; and, when He went out of it, PEACE was bequeathed.* From the justness of which observation, may be inferred the manifest impropriety of a Christian Minister's taking too deep and too acrimonious a part, in matters of merely civil concern.

Few men, indeed, have been more prone to dabble in politics, than some divines. And, it must be added, that, in general, few men have acquitted themselves more lamely, upon that subject, than those Reverend Daubers with untemper'd mortar. For one Dean Tucker, who draws a sensible pen on the occasion; an hundred

ignorant and mercenary Scribblers emerge from their concealments, to darken counsel by words without knowledge.

The truth is, that those of the Clergy, who mostly content themselves with paddling in the shallows of a superficial morality; step much beyond the line, both of their ability, and of their proper department, when they attempt to fathom the deep water of politics. For 'tis well known, that (in *past* ages at least) politics and morality have had but very slender connection with each other *.

As to those of us, who deem it our duty to preach the Gospel, and to *know nothing*, among our people, *but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified*; we, of all persons in the world, should religiously abstain from whatever may conduce to cherish the seeds, and fan the fire, of civil discord. Shocking it is, when they, who profess to experience, and to preach, the love of Christ; can so far prostitute the dignity and design of their sacred calling, as to offer fulsome incense at the shrine of aggrandized authority, or seek to exasperate differing party's against each other: instead of laboring to preserve *unity of spirit*, to strengthen the *bond of peace*, and to promote *righteousness of life*.

* "What are you for? Religion, or Politics? There's a couple of Topics for you! no more like each other, than Oil and Vinegar. And yet those two, beaten together by a State-Cook, make Sauce for an whole Nation."

CONGRÈVE.

Such

Such bad men in black, pay very little attention to that solemn vow, which they took, at the time of their investiture with the holy order of Priesthood : when they pledged themselves to God and Man, that they would “ lay aside the study of the
“ world, and of the flesh ; and maintain and set
“ forwards, as much as in them lieth, quietness,
“ peace, and love, among all christian people.”

Our direct business is with the polity of an invisible and better country ; even of a kingdom, which is not of this world. On one hand, we are to sound the trumpet, not of secular, but of spiritual, alarm : And, on the other, to proclaim, unto them that *mourn*, and to them that *believe*, in Sion,

- ‘ The joyful news of sin forgiv’n,
- ‘ Of hell subdu’d, and peace with heav’n.’

Hence, ’tis my steadfast opinion, that pulpits were built, to answer far nobler and more important purposes, than those of political declamation : and that an occasion must be very singular indeed, to warrant the substitution of discussions, so exceedingly remote from the letter and spirit of our heavenly commission. To those, therefore, who, as Ministers of Christ, entangle themselves with the affairs of this life, may that question be fairly accommodated ; *What dost thou here, Elijah ?*

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There may arise, however, a co-incidence of circumstances, so uncommon in themselves, as to admit of some short deviation from this general rule. Among these, I deem myself authorized to number that occasion, on which I have the honor of addressing you, at present. We are assembled, for a purpose intimately connected with matters of national consideration : namely, to humble ourselves at the footstool of Uncreated Majesty ; to deplore our own sins, and the sins of our people ; and to supplicate the blessing of heaven on our King and Country, the two prime objects of our earthly love.

Things standing thus, I find myself constrained, for once, briefly to start from my usual sphere. With a view to make my political Moderation known, to as many as condescend to hear me this day ; and in order to rectify a few mistakes, which have been industriously and unjustly circulated ; I request leave to præmise some necessary particulars, declarative of my civil creed. For, notwithstanding my religious and political honesty have, on more worldly occasions than one, apparently stood in my way ; yet, through the good hand of God upon me, it is my invariable rule, to be strictly and inviolably transparent, even though it were to my own hindrance. We live at a time, when virtue of every kind is (for the most part), literally, and solely, its own reward.

ward. And an exceeding great reward is, most certainly, and inseparably, connected with it. For who can describe the sweetness of that moral joy, which results from *the testimony of conscience, that, in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have our conversation in the world?* With this simplicity, I observe,

1. That as I am, in the literal sense of the word, an *Englishman*; so I wish to be such, in the best sense of it. Next to the GOSPEL of Christ, I love and revere the CONSTITUTION of my country. Consequently,

2. I am not a *Republican*. On the contrary, I am a Royalist, on principle. I have a most cordial and profound veneration, both for the office, and for the person, of the King: and hold myself obliged, if necessity required, to lay down my life in their just defence. Every pulse I have, sincerely and strongly beats for the present moderate Episcopacy, in the church; and for constitutional Monarchy, in the state.

Here, if I might be allowed a few moments' digression, I would observe, that the notion of a pure Republic is a mere idea, and no more. A Commonwealth, truly and strictly so called, never yet subsisted, and never can subsist, except in the
brains

brains of a few speculative men, and in such writings as those of *Plato*, and *Sir Thomas More*. The many were always stately governed by the few: and always must be, while men are men; i. e. while Providence distributes wisdom, wealth, and power, with unequal hand. An whole nation can no more be civil governors, than an whole church can be clergymen, or all clergymen bishops. I once asked the most respectable Republican in this kingdom, *Whether a single instance can be produced, of a genuine Republic, in the whole compass of ancient or modern history?* I knew, the answer must be in the negative; and so it was. There were, I confess, a few short periods, when the *Athenian* administration approached the nearest, perhaps, of any other, to an entire democracy: but, even then, it fell extremely short of the name. In our own country, when the House of Commons, after the execution of *Charles I.* assumed the sovereign power; was *England*, even during the short continuance of that self-created authority, a real *Republic*? Nay, verily. The three nations were three kingdoms still. They were governed by a multitude of kings, instead of one. Though without the name and the splendors, the long parliament ('till *Cromwell* tripp'd up their heels) possess'd and exercised all the powers, of the most absolute royalty: and he that has the substance, need care but little for the shadow. Look at those nominal Republics, which are now subsisting in several parts of Europe. Ask an inhabitant of *Holland*, of *Genoa*, of *Ve-*

nice, Geneva, or of the Switz cantons, whether the government there is completely popular? No such thing. They are not Republics, but Oligarchys. And Oligarchy is, usually, a species of the most grievous and insufferable Tyranny.

3. In my opinion, every true Englishman is a *Constitutionalist*: or, one who considers that happy mixture of the regal, the aristocratic, and the popular rights, established in this kingdom, to be one of the best and noblest efforts of human wisdom and justice, that ever did honor to the human understanding and to the human heart. Yet, let it be observed, that *the Persons*, who compose that most august threefold body, are not (as some have inaccurately affirmed) *the Constitution* itself, but the natural and sworn *guardians* of it,

4. Though the constitution does not consist of the three estates, but the three estates derive their very being and importance from the constitution; still, the *health* and *safety* of the constitution depend on the preservation of that just balance and mutual counterpoise of power, which this wise distribution of authority was calculated to effectuate and maintain. If, in some remote age, the *regal* influence should absorb either the *aristocratic*, or the *representative*, branch of the legislature, or both; —on the other hand, should the higher or the

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lower

lower house of Parliament be, in some future period, sufficiently powerful and wicked (as the Commons, in the last century, were) to annihilate the just prerogatives of the Crown, or the just privileges of the other parliamentary estate;—the constitutional balance will be broken: the several weights, by being thrown into one scale, will preponderate, too much, one way; and the sacred ark, of generous and equal Liberty, will kick the beam. In the former case, posterity would be subject to the will of an individual tyrant: in the latter, to the still more terrible yoke of many.

5. I believe, that the spirit and privileges of the English Constitution are analogous to the vital fluids in an animal body: which ought, by a liberal and impartial circulation, to warm and invigorate, not only the head and heart, but the meanest and remotest limb. Yea, every single hair is entitled, in it's measure, to partake of the common supply.

A motley empire, made up of slaves and free-men, could not, from the very nature of so heterogeneous a combination, continue long in that condition. Like the mongrel image, in Nebuchadnezzar's vision, it would soon fall, and be broken. Despotism has ever proved an insatiable gulph. Throw ever so much into it, it would still yawn for more. Were Liberty to perish, irretrievably,
from

from any part of the English world; the whole would, soon, be deluged, by the black sea of arbitrary power.

Moreover, *tua res agitur, paries quum proximus ardet*: 'When your next neighbour's house is on fire, your own is in danger.'—Some years ago, a gentleman, in Nottinghamshire, who had injured one of his feet; by paring a nail to the quick; laughed, on being told, that there was danger of a mortification. "Be it so," said he: "the foot is a long way from the heart." But, as distant as it was, the ascending mortification put a period to his life, not many weeks afterward. It holds as true, in the body civil, as in the body natural; that, *if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it*.

6. The English constitution is a system of qualify'd liberty. What is liberty? 1. Not an inflammatory turbulence of conduct; nor an unlimited freedom, or indecency, of speech; nor a blind, red-hot attachment to party. Party, as one well defines it, is "The madness of many, for the gain of a few." Whereat true liberty consists in the legal safety, and good order, of each; for the advantage of the whole.—2. Liberty is not licentiousness, or a power of committing evil with impunity: but the privilege of *doing* all the good we can; and of *enjoying*, without molestation, and without fear, as much personal happiness as is

consistent with the written law of God, the unwritten law of Conscience, and the welfare of Society at large.

Now, I would no more reprobate the true, modest, constitutional Liberty ; merely because some mistaken zealots may, occasionally, abuse it to licentiousness : than I would reject the scripture-doxtrin of Grace, because a few men, of corrupt minds, may possibly pervert it to Antinomianism.

If you wish to know, clearly, what is comprized in the idea of English Liberty ; two or three hours' reading will, at any time, thoroughly inform you. Peruse *Magna Charta*, publicly signed by king John ; and afterwards confirmed, with still greater circumstances of solemnity, by Henry III ; though execrably violated by both. To this, add a perusal of the *Petition of Right* ; very solemnly, but not very sincerely, ratified and recognized by Charles I. Then run over the *Bill of Rights*, which received either the hearty, or the dissembled, concurrence of William III. And, lastly, make yourself acquainted with the *Coronation Oath*, taken by our succeeding Monarchs. Whatever reaches, fully, to this fourfold standard, is constitutional Freedom. All, *below* this united mark, is *not* Liberty : and all *beyond* it, is, in legal construction, *Licentiousness*.

Can

Can any thing be more reasonable, and more easy, than for an Englishman to devote about *three hours*, out of an whole life time, to the knowledge of the Constitution of his country? How astonishingly and how deplorably general, is our political ignorance, as a nation; though most of us affect to value ourselves, on the excellency of our civil fabric! Like the Jews of old, too many Britons profess to *worship they know not what*: and too many others set but a slight esteem on a Constitution, which they would almost *worship*, if they *knew* it's worth. How inexcusable is English ignorance, when the short labor, and trivial expence, of so few hours' attention, would dissipate the mental cloud, and turn the darkness into day!

7. Intimately associated with civil, is *religious Liberty*.

This consists, (1.) in that natural and indefeasible right, which every reasonable man has from God (and which no human authority can lawfully take away or abridge), of *thinking* for himself, of *determining* for himself, and of decently *declaring* his ideas, concerning all and every thing that relates to sacred matters.—(2.) In *worshipping* God, both privately and publicly, according to the dictates of *his own* conscience; and that as safely, and as fearlessly, as St. Paul preached in his hired house

house at Rome: viz. *αυθιμος*, *without impediment*, and no man forbidding him.

Every species of positive penalty, for differing modes of faith and worship; is, at once, anti-christian and impolitic, irrational and unjust. While any religious denomination of men deport themselves as dutyfull subjects to the state, and as harmless members of the community; they are entitled to civil protection, and to social esteem: whether they be Protestants, Papists, Jews, Mahometans, or Pagans. In this respect, among many others, the British Legislature, for near a century past, have eminently made their moderation known to all men. And Judge *Blackstone*, in a treatise which does equal honor to his country and to himself, has lately observed; that, “Undoubtedly, all persecution and oppression of weak consciences, on the score of religious persuasions, are highly unjustifiable upon every principle of natural reason, civil liberty, or sound religion. But” (as he justly adds), “care must be taken, not to carry this indulgence into such extremes, as may endanger the NATIONAL CHURCH. There is always a difference to be made, between toleration and establishment.”

“Certainly, our ancestors were mistaken, in their plans of compulsion and intolerance. The sin of schism, as such, is by no means the object of temporal coercion and punishment. If, through

“ through weakness of intellect, through mis-
 “ directed piety, through perverseness and acer-
 “ bity of temper, men quarrel with the ecclesi-
 “ astical establishment; the civil magistrate has
 “ nothing to do with it, unless their tenets and
 “ practice are such as threaten ruin or disturbance
 “ to the state. He is bound, indeed, to protect
 “ the Established Church: and, if this can be bet-
 “ ter effected, by admitting none, but it's genuin
 “ members, to offices of trust and emolument,
 “ he is certainly at liberty so to do: the disposal
 “ of offices being matter of favor and discre-
 “ tion. But, this point being once secured, all
 “ persecution for diversity of opinions, however
 “ ridiculous or absurd they may be, is contrary
 “ to every principle of sound policy and civil free-
 “ dom. The names and subordination of the
 “ clergy, the posture of devotion, the materials
 “ and color of the minister's garment, the joining
 “ in a known or an unknown form of prayer, and
 “ other matters of the same kind, must be left to
 “ the option of every man's private judgement*.”

If we consider this branch of Christian Modera-
 tion, merely in a *civil* view; nothing will be found,
 more politically wise. The remark of a late †
 Philosopher must ever hold good: that, ‘ *The*
 ‘ *true secret, for the discrete management of Sellarists,*

* Commentaries, B. IV. Ch. 4.

† Mr. David Hume.

'is, to TOLERATE them.' By which means, they are render'd less considerable; and, of course, less formidable. The more the children of Israel were *oppressed* in Egypt, the more they *multiply'd* and *grew*.

Let us, now, take a survey of MODERATION, not as a public, but as a private virtue: or, rather, as a Christian grace, *inspired* by the Holy Spirit into the hearts of those who are born of God; and *shining* in the tempers, words, and works, of his elect, regenerated children.

St. Paul addressed, not only the text, but this whole epistle, to the Saints in Christ Jesus, at Philippi; and whom he declares to have been *partakers* of the same grace with himself. To these, whose names were in the Book of Life, and whose evident justification by Christ's righteousness entitled them to rejoice in the Lord always; he delivers that amiable precept, *Let your moderation* [to wit, your lenity, candor, tenderness, equity, and condescending meekness] *be known unto all men.*

The lovely constellation of graces, comprized in this expressive term, are what the Apostle means, by our participating the mind that was in Christ: even that *Wisdom from above*, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

hypocrisy. It includes those effects of the blessed Spirit's influence, which are *love; joy; peace; long-suffering; gentleness; goodness; faith; meekness; temperance; and crucifixion to the flesh with its affections and lusts.*

Would you see the import of this significant word, exemplified to the life? Consult the following character, or moral portrait, of the MESSIAH; whom, as Man and Mediator, God the Father thus prophetically described: * *Behold my servant, whom I sustain; my elect, in whom my soul delighteth. I have put my Spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgement [or, make known my gospel and purposes of grace] to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up; nor cause his voice to be heard in the streets; [i. e. He shall be all mildness, affability, and patience. No boisterous wrath, nor tumultuous noise, shall discolor any part of his behavior. Though reviled, he will not revile again; nor threaten when he suffers. He will avoid every appearance of ostentation; and be as humble, as he is good. No fierce, opprobrious language shall issue from his lips. Not the smallest rising of malevolence shall violate his purity of heart. Invincible calmness shall dignify his conduct; and candor dwell upon his tongue]. A bruised reed shall be not break, and the smoking flax shall be not quench. He shall bring forth judgement unto truth.* — May we derive from his fullness; and, like Him,

* Isaiah xlii.

thus *make our moderation known unto all men!* That (to use the words of a good man, long since with God), “ As paper receives, from the press, letter
 “ for letter ; as wax receives, from the seal, mark
 “ for mark ; and as a mirror reflects face for face ;
 “ so we may receive, from Christ, grace for
 “ grace : and have, in ourselves, a measure of
 “ every virtue that shone so bright in Him !”

By viewing the features of some persons, you may know from what family they sprang : and, by observing the moral walk of Religious Professors, you may discern to whom they belong. *As many as are LED by the Spirit of God, THEY are the Sons of God.* All, who have God for their Father, and Christ for their Savior, have, sooner or later, the Holy Ghost for their Sanctifier : and their sanctification by Him is the effect and evidence of their adoption. By nature, the children of God themselves *bear the image of the earthly Adam* : but, in the very moment of their conversion by insuperable grace, they begin to *bear the image of the heavenly*. The seal of divine influence is set upon their hearts ; and their lives, from thenceforward, correspond to the transforming efficacy of that sacred impression. Being melted down, by penitence, and conviction of sin ; they are cast afresh, and * deliver'd into the gospel mold, where they

* St. Paul expresses this idea very finely, in Rom. VI. 17. *But God be thanked, that [though] ye were the Slaves of Sin, yet [in consequence of your Regeneration from above] ye have, from the Heart, obeyed that Mold of Doctrin into which ye were delivered.*

are shaped and fashion'd into vessels of honor, fit for the master's use. Like the cyon, they are severed from the sinfull stock, on which they grew; and, being inserted into Christ, the true vine, they bring forth fruit to God.

As, when a river is turned into a new channel, the stream forsakes it's antient bed, and pursues a course unknown 'till then; so the soul of man, when it's native captivity to sin and death, is *turned as the rivers in the South*, flows back to God, from whom it ran before; nor ceases to flow, 'till it has gained the ocean of infinite good.

This is the inseparable effect of union and communion with HIM. The glorious liberty of the children of God, is a liberty from the darkness of unbelief, and from the bondage of moral corruption, into the light of faith, the fire of love, and the law of righteousness. That quæstion, in the prophet, *Can the Æthiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?* admits of a favorable solution. The converting SPIRIT of God does that for us, which we could never do for ourselves. He makes the Æthiopian, in a moral sen'e, fair as the driven snow; and renders the spotted leopard spotless, in comparison of what he was. The vassals of iniquity become vessels of glory; and the soul, that once cleaved to the dust of sensuality, and lay dead

in trespasses and sins, is quicken'd from above, and made to sit in heavenly places with Christ Jesus. When the citadel of the human heart is taken by grace, the enemy's colors are displaced; Satan's usurped authority is superseded; the standard of the Cross is erected on the walls; and the spiritual rebel takes the vow of willing allegiance to Christ, his rightfull sovereign. The strong holds of sin, on one hand, and of self-righteousness, on the other, are batter'd down: and the soul, from that blessed moment, made free indeed, cries out, *Other lords have had dominion over me; but the darkness is past, and the true light now shines: the snare is broken, and I am deliver'd.*

From this experience of the divine power in our own hearts, we cannot but adopt the coelestial anthem, *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men!* Our Moderation becomes known to all; and some of the practical effects, produced by, and connected with, that spirit of holy moderation, are these that follow.

Where *Lust*, that fiery serpent, was wont to crawl; divine Love kindles her hallow'd flame, and raises the affections, as on eagles' wings, to heaven.

Where *Unbelief*, blind and fullen as the mole, lay wrapt in malicious gloom, loving darkness rather

ther than light, and seeking to undermine what she had not eyes to see ; FAITH diffuses the brightness of coelestial day, and leads the willing soul to Him who bought her with his blood.

Where *Insensibility*, thoughtless as the bird that hastens to the snare, and gay as a victim crowned for the slaughter, sported on the præcipice of destruction, and danced on the verge of death ; serious CONVICTION fixes her keen, but salutary, weapon : and filial FEAR keeps the avenues of the converted person's heart, and the actions of his life, in powerfull, but sweet, restraint.

Where *Envy* pined ; where *Malice* hiss'd ; where *Slander* sharpen'd her tongue ; and *Pride*, that bloated snake, lifted her swelling crest : universal CHARITY throws wide her arms ; HUMILITY stoops to the tenderest offices of beneficence ; and dovelike MEEKNESS smiles, with benignity in her heart, and the law of candor upon her lips.

Where *Intemperance* mix'd the intoxicating bowl, and lawless riot pushed the superfluous glass ; seeking to drown every thought of eternity, and to sink the poor remains of human dignity, in the poysonous draught : there, religious MODERATION marks out the limits ; mindfull of that more than golden rule, *Whether ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*

Where

Where *Prophaneness*, assuming the mask of wit, spawned the irreligious jest, and solicited the hellish laugh; prostituting, perhaps, even the language of Scripture to the purposes of licentious mirth, and playing on the very words of the Holy Ghost; trifling with sacred subjects, at which angels tremble, and lightly mentioning that adorable Name, at which angels bow: there, from the moment of conversion, grace introduces a total change. The renew'd sinner abhors himself, as in dust and ashes, for all that he has done; and can never sufficiently adore, admire, and revere, that infinite goodness, which, instead of turning him into hell, has turned him to God, and made him a living monument, not of deserved vengeance, but of unmerited mercy. His heart, which, 'till then, was a sink of impurity and prophanation, is transformed into an house of prayer; and his mouth, once the seat of blasphemy, is consecrated into an altar of praise.

Where *Avarice* sat brooding, tenacious as death, and insatiate as the grave; unfeeling as marble, and deaf to the cry of distress, as the adder that stops her ear: discrete LIBERALITY unlocks the heart, and well-directed beneficence extends her hand, to bestow. The language of the soul is similar to that of Zacchæus: *Behold, Lord, the half of my goods, I give to the poor; and, if I have taken*
any

any thing from any man, by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. The true believer, like his adorable Savior, goes about, doing good, and seeking whom he may relieve.

Where *Discontent*, like a wild bull in a net, raged and struggled, turning the rod of affliction into a serpent, and charging Providence with folly; reclining PATIENCE; kisses the hand that smites, and, knowing that Infinite Wisdom and Goodness have mingled the draught, not only receives, but even relishes, the cup: while celestial HOPE casts her anchor on the inestimable promise of Him who says, *I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee*; and who has immutably declared, that *All things, without exception, work together for good, to them that love God, to them that are the called according to his purpose.* Thus does the follower of Christ, in the communicated strength of the Holy One, take up his cross; content to bear it as long, and to carry it as far, as God's unerring will shall please:

“ Nor thinks it chance, nor murmurs at the
“ load;

“ But knows, what man calls fortune, is from
“ God.”

Where *sacrilegious Impiety* once robb'd Jehovah of his own Day, and prophaned the SABBATH, either by rioting and excess, or by travelling,

velling, or by the transaction of worldly business, or by making it an opportunity of recreation and idle amusement; thus rendering the best of days subservient to the worst purposes, either of atrocious guilt, or of criminal insignificance; either basely selling, or unprofitably squandering, those precious, those irretrievable hours, which should be appropriated to the glory of God, and to the spiritual improvement of the soul;—There, religious regard to divine appointment, and love to the gracious Appointer, constrain the Christian to keep the Lord's Day holy to the Lord, and to cultivate an habitual, increasing fitness for the enjoyment of that Sabbatism, that everlasting rest, which remaineth for the people of God.

In a word, where *Impenitency*, armed with ten-fold brass, stiffened her neck, and withdrew her shoulder from the yoke of obedience;—the once obdurate sinner, being made willing in the day of God's power, crys out, with vanquish'd Paul, *Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do?* Tears of contrition flow, like water from the smitten rock; **REPENTANCE** strikes her conscious breast; and **DEVOTION** darts her aspiring eyes to heaven.

May those of us, who have, hitherto, been unconcerned about the great work of conversion, beg of God to shew them the things belonging to
their

their peace, e'er death makes them wise indeed;
 wise, perhaps, too late!

And may such of us, as are awakened, by grace,
 to the experimental knowledge, love, and imitation
 of Christ; be led, farther, and deeper, into acquaint-
 ance with God, and communion with his blessed
 Spirit: gaining, day by day, brighter evidences of
 our Election to eternal life, and more substantial
 marks of our interest in the Covenant of Grace.
 Pray for the full assurance of faith, for the feel-
 ing of God's favor to you in Christ Jesus,
 and for the knowledge of salvation by the for-
 giveness of sins.

There are, indeed, seasons of darkness and dis-
 tress, wherein God's dearest people may be tempt-
 ed to fear, that their mark is not the mark of his
 children; and to say, with them in the Psalmist,
We see not our tokens. But let not the doubting
 Believer think himself an Alien, *because he doubts*:
 nor let him imagine, that, because he sees not
 his tokens, he therefore has no tokens to see. A
 broken and a contrite heart is an infallible token
 for good. For justification, fly to the righteous-
 ness of Jesus. If you cannot wrap yourself in
 it, yet throw yourself upon it, and He will not
 cast you out. For Sanctification, commit yourself,
 in the diligent use of means, to the power and faith-
 fullness of the Eternal Spirit, who has inviolably

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promised

promised and covenanted, to write his law upon the hearts of his people. He will not send you empty away, nor permit you to seek his face in vain.

To seek his face, with fasting, and supplication, and mourning, is the duty, and, I trust, will be the grand business, of us all, this day. And reason enough we have, to prostrate ourselves before the God of armys and King of kings: for, even as individuals, and much more as a nation, *our iniquitys are increased, and our trespasses are grown up unto the heavens.*

“ What land so favor’d of the skys ?

“ And yet, what land so vile ?”

Sin is the source of all the temporal evils, which we are met to deprecate. Mr. Soame Jenyns has justly reminded us, that, “ If Christian nations were nations of Christians, all *War* would be impossible, and unknown among them.” Be it, then, our prayer, on this solemn, this interesting occasion, that, as the far greater part of the inhabitants of our island are nominal Christians, and have been Baptized with water into the outward profession of the gospel; God would please to
make

make us Christians indeed and in truth, by baptizing us with the Holy Ghost, and with the mystic fire of his sanctifying love. We might then hope, soon to see the day, when War shall be made to cease; when our swords shall be beat into ploughshares, and our spears bent into pruning hooks. *Phosphore, redde diem!* May our loved and honor'd Sovereign quickly behold his empire resembling a city that is at unity with itself! 'Till that most desirable period shall arrive, *let our Moderation as Christians, and our Loyalty as subjects, be known unto all men*, by every word of our lips, and by every action of our lives: ever mindful of this grand, scriptural maxim, that we cannot truly be said to *fear God*, unless we also *love the Brotherhood*, and *honor the King*.

I shall only detain you, a moment or two longer, by observing, that you have now an opportunity of adding another good work, to those in which you have already been engaged. When Cornelius *fasted and prayed*, he crowned those dutys with shewing *mercy to the poor*: and an angel was sent to him from heaven, acquainting him, that *his prayers and his alms-deeds were ascended, as a memorial, before God*. The Ethelburgha Society, who are at the expence of supporting a
 Sunday

Sunday Evening Lecture, and of maintaining a Charity School for the education, board, cloathing, and apprenticing, of no fewer than fifty-two children, of both sexes; request your benevolent contribution, to assist them in the support of this noble and eminently usefull Institution. I beseech you, therefore, Brethren, rightly to improve the present season of national humiliation, by duely considering these awfull words of God, with which I shall conclude :

*Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? Wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your Fast, ye find pleasure, and exact all the things wherewith ye grieve others. Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness. Ye shall not fast, as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high.—Wilt thou call this a Fast, and an acceptable day unto the Lord?—Is not this the Fast that I have chosen; to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppress'd go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not, to steal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor, that are cast out, to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from thy own flesh? Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thy health shall spring forth speedily.—Thou shalt call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am: if thou take
away*

away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity. And, if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shalt thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon-day. And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drougt: and thou shalt be like a water'd garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.

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